

to read out the decoded arbitrary shape picture signals and the background signal therefrom.

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43. A video decoding method according to Claim 40, further comprising:

calculating a motion compensation prediction value on the basis of readout one of the decoded arbitrary shape picture signals and motion vector information input to the motion compensation prediction section; and

orthogonally transforming the motion compensation prediction value on the basis of the alpha-map signal to obtain an orthogonal transform coefficient of the motion compensation prediction value of a picture of the arbitrary shape indicated by the alpha-map signal.

~~44.~~

44. A video decoding method according to Claim ~~43~~³⁵, wherein the step of calculating a motion compensation prediction value includes the step of calculating the motion compensation prediction value for each of the decoded arbitrary shape picture signals stored in the memories in accordance with the alpha-map signal.

~~45.~~

45. A video decoding method comprising:

decoding a coded alpha-map signal for discriminating a background of an input signal and at least one object thereof;

decoding arbitrary shape pictures of objects in accordance with the alpha-map signal to obtain decoded arbitrary shape picture signals; and

storing the decoded arbitrary shape picture signals in a plurality of memories, respectively, the decoded arbitrary shape picture signals being independently read out from the memories to be used for a motion compensation prediction of each of the reconstructed picture signals.

REMARKS

Favorable consideration of this application is respectfully requested.

Claims 19-45 are presently active in this application. Original Claims 1-18 have been

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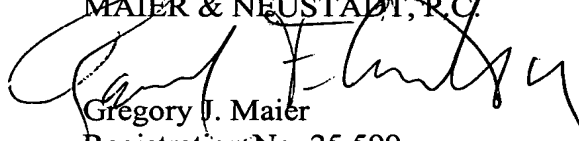
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canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. New Claims 19-45 have been added without the introduction of any new matter to provide Applicants with claims having a scope of protection to which they are entitled.

In light of the above, an early and favorable examination on the merits as to the presently active Claims 19-45 is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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